

**2002
Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR)
Program Review**

prepared for

**City of San Antonio
Neighborhood Action Department**

by

**Eichenfield & Associates
Jeff Eichenfield
Keith Kjelstrom**

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**City of San Antonio
Neighborhood Action Department**

**2003
Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR)
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Executive Summary

The City of San Antonio selected the consulting firm of Eichenfield & Associates to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) Program in January – April 2003. The assessment team included Jeff Eichenfield and Keith Kjelstrom and the assessment process entailed research and analysis of NCR Program and local district project documents, a telephone survey of other successful citywide commercial revitalization programs in the country, a kick-off event, district tours, and a series of interviews.

The need for inner-city neighborhood commercial revitalization in San Antonio is great. The districts possess unique assets including proximity to the downtown core and the inner loop freeway, access to residential and automobile markets, historic architecture, unique, independent businesses, and leaders who are willing and able to revitalize their communities. The districts, however, often have intrinsic weaknesses that make revitalization especially challenging. These include difficult geography, poor infrastructure, poverty, and lack of municipal financial resources.

Observations

Solid Goals. The NCR Program's goals are as compelling today as when the program was set up. Goals include empowering community groups to restore commercial district vitality, stimulating investment, creating economic opportunity, and improving physical appearance.

Staff Strengths. District projects appreciate staff's knowledge and responsiveness.

District Performance. The district projects are producing results. Section 4 presents observations and recommendations for each district.

Time Frame for Success. Participants want more results at a faster pace. The program would benefit from increased visibility and awareness of successes already achieved.

One Size Does Not Fit All. When started, the program used the four-point Main Street model as an organizational and philosophical framework, but not all of the districts fit the Main Street parameters.

Designations for Dollars. Districts with compelling needs that did not meet the program selection criteria were nevertheless selected and funded resulting in the perception of "political" allocations of the NCR designation.

Reality of Dependency on City. District NCR projects are heavily dependent on the City for operating

funds and are expected to remain so for the projected future.

Need for Enhanced Integration of NCR Efforts Throughout City Government.

The program clearly benefits from rewarding partnerships with other City departments, but enhanced collaboration is needed.

More Public Improvements Please.

The City's commercial districts have strong needs for streetscape improvements, pedestrian amenities, landscaping and public art.

Evolution Will Require Building Staff Power and Skills.

If the NCR Program is going to fulfill its potential to meet local district needs, it will need to grow in size and expertise.

Clear Cry for Taming the Paper Monster.

Contract monitoring and reporting and preparing and reviewing billing packages is devouring too much time.

Brewing Frustrations. The program needs to move away from an image that suggests rigidity in desiring conformity to program parameters and toward an image of sufficient flexibility to embrace a diversity of local district projects and their ideas.

Models from Other Cities. Section 5 and Appendix B present findings from the survey of other cities' commercial revitalization programs.

Recommendations

Keep Up the Good Work. The program's start-up years are a solid foundation upon which to evolve it to keep pace with the dynamic needs and rise in sophistication of the client districts.

Maintain Local Funding. It is very unlikely that districts can support revitalization programs on their own. The City should keep providing operating funds for local district projects and should continue to fund effective projects after the initial six-year period.

Expand the Program. Augment the NCR Program by designating new partnership and revitalization projects and by growing the NCR Program staff.

Develop Specialty Capabilities and Enhance Training. In response to local district project needs, the NCR Program should develop specialized knowledge and skills in areas such as complex nonprofit management, fund raising and grant proposal writing, business recruitment, and real estate development.

Rein in the Bureaucracy. Establish a task force to review the NCR Program's reporting, compliance and billing processes. Streamline the process for approving and paying invoices submitted to the program from the local district projects.

Reposition Program Style. The program should *lead* with the roles of technical assistance and coaching, advocacy within City government, problem solving and training, and should back those up with its responsibilities of monitoring, enforcement and performance review.

Enhance Program Visibility. The program's many accomplishments and its goals and objectives for the future are not receiving the recognition required to sustain enthusiasm and support. Several opportunities for enhancing visibility include creating an annual awards program with a banquet, awards brochure and media coverage that celebrates the successes of the local district programs.

Invest in the Long Haul. Local program leaders, city staff and elected officials should continue to recognize that commercial district revitalization in the inner city takes a long time.

Develop Funding Tools. San Antonio needs to develop its use of several key funding tools including tax increment financing (TIF) areas, business-based and/or property-based business improvement districts (BIDs), maintenance assessment districts, and continued creative use of CDBG funds. The Neighborhood Action Department should initiate stronger partnerships between the NCR Program and the corporate and foundation community.

Enhance Interdepartmental Coordination. Continue to build collaborative approaches to commercial district revitalization with other City departments including Public Works, Police and Planning. Establish interdepartmental technical advisory committees to address specific issues or projects in each NCR district.

Consider an Operation Facelift Makeover. Work with district project staff and participants to evaluate any impediments to fuller use of the City's storefront improvement incentive program.

Nurture Network Leadership. Capitalize on the potential of the *Networking Forum* to build leadership across the participating district projects and develop collective approaches to common needs, challenges and opportunities.

Next Steps. Establish a steering committee of City and district representatives to review the observations and recommendations of this report and prioritize and schedule implementation of the more cogent ideas for program development.

1.

NCR Program Review: Purpose and Process

To continue the evolution and improvement of the Neighborhood Action Department's Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) Program, the City of San Antonio conducted a comprehensive assessment of the program in January – April 2003.

About the NCR Program

The San Antonio City Council created the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) Program in 1998 to empower community groups to restore productivity of underused neighborhood urban retail and business areas.

The goals of the NCR Program are to support economic reinvestment in business corridors of San Antonio's urban core, create economic and employment opportunities in the inner city, and improve the physical appearance of these areas. Modeled after the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Program, the NCR Program works with community-based nonprofit organizations that successfully compete to participate. The participant organizations develop and implement economic development plans with strategies in four major areas of effort. These include promoting and marketing the business district to potential customers, preserving and maximizing

the districts' unique physical assets through design and planning of private and public improvements, providing assistance to promote business retention and attraction, and organizing together to recapture the economic vitality that once characterized the areas.

Through the NCR Program, the City funds organizations at two levels:

Partnership Project. This level makes \$5,000 available by contract to groups interested in building organizational capacity to undertake a full-fledged revitalization program. Current Partnership Projects are Fort Sam Gateway and St. Paul Square.

Revitalization Project. This level provides \$370,000 over a six-year period to Partnership Project organizations that demonstrate ability to implement a full-time economic development program. Current Revitalization Projects are EastTown @ Commerce, Historic East Houston, New Light Village, Southtown, Deco District, Austin Highway, Midtown on Blanco, and Presa Real.

In addition to the financial assistance, the NCR Program provides a variety of services to the network districts:

- Assist selected commercial districts with organizational capacity development and preparation for program participation.
- Evaluate market influences and physical characteristics of each district.

- Identify public and private development opportunities consistent with the goals established by each revitalization organization.
- Identify funding for public improvements such as sidewalk repair and streetlights.
- Through Operation Facelift provide grant funds to businesses for enhancements to their building facades.
- Convene educational and networking forums.
- Maintain a library of resource materials.



Program Assessment Process

Through a competitive proposal and selection process, the City of San Antonio selected the commercial revitalization consulting firm of Eichenfield & Associates to conduct the program assessment.

Assessment Team. The assessment team included Jeff Eichenfield, with more than 16 years of experience staffing Main Street programs,

organizing business and property owners and providing downtown revitalization consulting services, and Keith Kjelstrom, with 20 years of economic development experience, including eight years directing the California Main Street Program.

Research and Analysis. The team reviewed applications, studies, work plans, surveys, contracts, meeting minutes, newsletters, marketing materials, quantitative performance measures, and other background materials on the NCR Program and the participating district programs. To obtain reference points for the strategies, services and challenges of the NCR Program, the team conducted a telephone survey of seven other successful citywide commercial revitalization programs in the United States.

Assessment Initiation Event. To stimulate enthusiasm and quality participation in the assessment process, the NCR Program convened a Kick-Off Event on February 4, 2003. Fifty-two people participated including 37 representatives of district organizations and 15 City staff. The evening included dinner and socializing, tabletop displays illustrating each district's achievements, and presentations by each organization about their accomplishments and priorities.

Interviews and Site Visits. The heart of the assessment was a comprehensive series of interviews with city staff and elected officials and local district project leaders. City interview groups included the NCR Program,

Neighborhood Action Department, Housing and Community Development, Assistant City Manager's Office, Police Department, Planning Department, City Council, and Mayor's Office. Local district hosts guided the assessment team on driving and walking tours and arranged for meetings with staff, board members, committee members, business owners, property owners, residents, and representatives of partner organizations. A list of the interviewees is presented in Appendix A.

2. Introduction: The Need for Inner City Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization

San Antonio's neighborhood commercial districts possess many unique assets. They have good proximity to the downtown core and the inner loop freeway. They are located along major traffic corridors that bring thousands of automobiles and potential customers past their businesses. They possess historic architecture and unique mom and pop businesses that differentiate them from the sameness of chain store shopping centers. Many have anchor tenants or institutions that have a regional following. Adjacent residential neighborhoods are becoming more attractive, and there is new economic reinvestment from new residents who want to live in historic homes in inner city locations. Most importantly, the districts are home to residents and

businesses who care about the safety and economic vitality of their neighborhoods and who want to actively participate in community revitalization efforts.

The districts, however, have intrinsic weaknesses that have led to their economic decline and that create serious challenges to commercial revitalization.

Difficult Geography

Many of the NCR districts stretch out along very long corridors of sprawl-type development related to automobile use. These corridors lack cohesive cores that make it easy for neighborhood residents to shop multiple businesses in one outing and to think of these districts as their specific "neighborhood shopping areas." It also makes it difficult to organize business associations and to develop coordinated marketing for the districts because businesses are dispersed and there is such a wide diversity of business types and business needs. Other districts are very small, almost too small to draw significant numbers of customers. It is also very difficult to organize very small districts into business associations because they lack an adequate pool of volunteers.

Poor Infrastructure

Many of the districts' streets, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and storm drainage are in poor condition. Utility poles are unsightly and need undergrounding. They do not benefit from tax increment funding (TIF) districts or property owner assessment districts that many other cities use to fund infrastructure improvements.

The Community's Economic Challenges

San Antonio historically has had high poverty rates that have been heightened by the loss of military institutions and jobs in the recent decades. While the nation's economy was flying high at the time the NCR Program was established, the current economic downturn has made NCR Program fund raising and business development difficult. Most of the NCR districts have major blight remediation and crime prevention needs. Lower income populations are also more difficult to organize into business associations because residents and business owners do not have the luxury of time to devote to volunteer projects.

Lack Of Financial Resources Within City Government

As mentioned above, San Antonio has not used tax increment funding (TIF) districts, property owner assessment districts, merchant assessments / business license fees, and developer impact fees in the way that many other

cities do to fund commercial revitalization. San Antonio relies on General Fund, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and bond proceeds to support the NCR Program. The voters, many of whom are conservative about municipal spending and fearful of "big government", must approve bonds. CDBG funds are sometimes difficult to use for commercial revitalization because of federal requirements and paperwork.

Many of these challenges were not anticipated at the time the NCR Program was developed. Citywide neighborhood commercial revitalization models at the time were very new and didn't have the benefit of experience to draw from. As a result, the high demand for commercial revitalization assistance in a difficult urban environment quickly overcame the NCR Program's goals and ability to provide services. With little other funding available besides NCR, key stakeholders in the districts looked to the program to fund what they felt was needed. A program that was designed to award three years of decreasing matching funds to nonprofit organizations with high capacity and ability to implement revitalization became a program that is providing six years of near full funding to fledging organizations with little revitalization experience.

The NCR Program has been very responsive to these changing priorities, and these "beginner" organizations have made significant progress in a short amount of time. These successes need to be recognized and applauded. There

remains, however, frustration among city staff, politicians and the district stakeholders who want to make the program more effective and see more immediate and visible results.

3. Current State of the NCR Program

Solid Goals

When the San Antonio City Council established the NCR Program in 1998, its goals were to

- Empower community groups to restore productivity of underutilized neighborhood urban retail and business areas.
- Support economic reinvestment in business corridors.
- Create economic and employment opportunities in the inner city.
- Improve the physical appearance of these areas.

These goals are pursued through the designation, funding, capacity building, market analysis, strategy formation, physical improvements and partnership stimulation tools identified above in Section 1.

The assessment team found that the goals are as compelling today as when the program was set up. All of the interviewees – city staff, city elected officials, local program leaders – expressed clear support for the goals of the program.

Staff Strengths

Interviewees stated their appreciation for the dedication and hard work of NCR Program staff. They are grateful for staff's understanding of and responsiveness to local district project needs. They cited staff's timely response to information needs and a sincere willingness to "roll up their sleeves" and work as a team with the district projects to help solve problems.

They appreciate staff's priority attention to allocating funding to the district projects and ensuring that contract requirements are met in order to ensure payments. While they clearly expressed their frustration with paperwork requirements and extended reimbursement timeframes, discussed below, they felt that NCR Program staff also are frustrated by those challenges and are advocates within the City for the needs of the local programs.

District Performance

As discussed below in Section 4, Individual Districts Observations and Recommendations, the district projects are indeed achieving the goals of the program. Through City funding and technical assistance and the talents of each district, community groups are becoming empowered to revitalize their commercial neighborhoods. Economic reinvestment is occurring, business ownership and employment opportunities are being created, and the safety, cleanliness and appearance of these areas are improving.

Time Frame for Success

But, many interviewees felt that visible, physical changes were not resulting fast enough. The assessment team has observed this perception in countless communities tackling revitalization. The team advises that, on the one hand, revitalization stakeholders should face the fact that revitalization does take time – expecting obvious success in six to ten years rather than three to five years is a realistic time frame. On the other hand, the team got the impression that San Antonio, in its individual neighborhood commercial districts and as a city, has not fully recognized the achievements that the NCR Program and its district projects have accomplished already. Enhanced public relations activities to educate the community about revitalization and celebrate accomplishments are warranted.

One Size Does Not Fit All

While the NCR Program was launched using the Main Street four-point approach to revitalization as its guiding model, most NCR Program districts do not fit the classic ideal of a cohesive, six-block, pedestrian-scale Main Street commercial district of historic architecture and independent businesses. Some are long, linear strips with dispersed businesses, some are small retail nodes without a critical mass of business owners who can help lead the project, some have sparse commercial uses with industrial and vacant land, and several lack sufficient market power in the adjacent

neighborhoods to readily fuel commercial revitalization.

Only three districts – Southtown, Midtown on Blanco and the Deco District – fit the Main Street model in a straightforward way. Is that a problem? It is only a problem if San Antonio expects all of the districts to behave in the same way. If, in hindsight, leaders reflect back to the establishment of the NCR Program and define its mission to be not just to demonstrate the pure Main Street model, but to revitalize diverse San Antonio commercial areas, then it is not a problem. The trick is to use the Main Street model flexibly, to view it as a large, comprehensive umbrella, to not allow it to be limiting, and to augment it with other tools when the needs arise.

Some of the “districts” are not commercial districts at all, but rather are nodes or residential or light industrial areas. In this regard, a NCR Program established for districts is not a fit. These areas’ needs also deserve attention, though, and the NCR Program, to the extent that it is a logical place to house the City’s response to those needs, can be modified to respond to them.

Designations for Dollars

As mentioned above, one way that the NCR Program has been modified *de facto* to respond to diverse needs outside of the commercial district model is by using the program to distribute greatly needed dollars to community-based revitalization organizations. Several interviewees have perceived

this as “political” selection of some NCR Program districts because those districts did not meet program selection criteria.

Reality of Dependency on City

None of the district projects evidenced significant diversification of funding beyond the city grant, nor did they show that they were developing strategic fund raising plans. Some programs, particularly the ones approaching the end of their six-year city funding period, expressed concern about their budget. The dependency on city funding to operate district projects certainly was learned during the 2001 NCR Program review. That review resulted in the City dropping the requirement that district projects raise matching funds and extending City funding from three to six years.

The heavy reliance of the district projects on City funding is not at all uncommon across the country, especially in poorer communities without a track record of using business improvement districts (BIDs) as a funding tool. Also, programs have a very hard time developing external funding once they have become reliant on city funds. A BID is an organization of property owners in a commercial district who tax themselves to raise money for district improvement. Core functions usually include keeping sidewalks and curbs clean, removing graffiti, and patrolling the streets.

Need for Enhanced Integration of NCR Efforts Throughout City Government

Throughout the interview process, the assessment team gathered impressions about the coordination of multiple city departments in revitalization efforts.

The involvement of the Police Department’s SAFFE officers in each district’s revitalization strategy was consistently strong. It is clear that several local district NCR projects have collaborated with their SAFFE officers and those partnerships have paid off in real improvements in commercial district safety as well as improvements in the districts’ image. The NCR Program should continue to promote partnerships with the SAFFE officers in all of the districts and should continue to call upon the Police Department administration to assist in this regard.

Another consistent theme was that the Public Works Department seemed to operate as if in a vacuum from commercial district revitalization leaders and activities. Several interviewees reported public “improvement” projects, especially street work that removed parking, which undermine pedestrian environment and district revitalization. Communications and scheduling with the Public Works Department by local district representatives and NCR Program staff also seemed to be very challenging.

The districts that have neighborhood plans were appreciative of the Planning Department and its Neighborhood Planning Division. More NCR Program

neighborhoods would benefit from neighborhood plan processes. It also seems that the local commercial district projects would benefit from more ongoing attention from the NCR Senior Planner, perhaps in the form of assistance in developing strategic economic development plans.

There also is a need to enhance the integration of the NCR Program with the goals and expectations of the CDBG program and with the City Council. The San Antonio Development Agency seems to offer potential to be a stronger NCR partner. Perhaps it could bring development expertise and technical assistance for infill development and technical assistance for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of specific properties.

More Public Improvements Please

By touring all of the NCR Program districts, the assessment team learned that the need is great throughout the City for streetscape improvements, pedestrian amenities, landscaping and public art. These public improvements are vital to fully capitalize on districts' potential, complement the work of each district revitalization program and enhance the community's quality of life.

Evolution Will Require Building Staff Power and Skills

As the individual districts and the NCR Program as a whole evolve, their needs for additional staff and specialized knowledge and skills grow. In response

to these needs, the NCR Program team will need to evolve its expertise, most critically in the area of real estate finance, development and management. NCR Program staff numbers also will need to increase to be able to deliver more intense technical assistance and "handholding" as the sophistication of local program needs intensifies.

Local program staff expertise also will need to evolve. The executive director position is a great place for quickly acquiring on-the-job training in these more challenging arenas, especially if knowledgeable experts on the NCR Program team are providing coaching. But, as several executive directors told the assessment team, they will need to acquire assistant directors or administrative support staff to free their time up from staff-intensive administrative duties.

Clear Cry for Taming the Paper Monster

All of the district projects expressed a strong concern that contract monitoring and reporting and preparing billing packages devoured a disproportionate amount of their staff time. A related issue is the currently long time local programs wait for their funding checks as their billing packages route through too many desks to achieve payment approval. Besides the district projects, virtually every other interviewee – city elected officials, city department representatives and NCR Program staff – echoed these concerns.

Brewing Frustrations

The assessment team interpreted the following roles of the NCR Program staff, as perceived by the program clients, the local district projects. The chart's left side presents roles that are perceived more as negative by program clients. The right side lists NCR Program roles that clients desire. Most interviewees realize that in reality the NCR Program needs to fulfill all of these roles.

Tensions and frustrations are developing as these roles conflict with each other. These tensions can be viewed as productive, though, because they can be observed and learned from in order to visibly position the NCR Program and its staff in the roles that the client favors. It is not a matter of having the luxury to drop the less popular roles altogether, but rather is a matter of balancing roles and packaging them into a program style that works best for the clients. The NCR Program will want to move away from client perceptions that suggest rigidity in desiring conformity to program parameters and toward an image of sufficient flexibility to embrace a diversity of local district projects.

Less Popular NCR Program Roles		NCR Program Roles Desired By Clients
Monitor and enforce	versus	Provide specialized technical assistance and coaching
Review performance	versus	Serve as advocates within the City, team members, problem solvers
Provide training in structured framework (such as Main Street)	versus	Provide training in response to needs expressed by diversity of local programs

4. Individual Districts: Observations and Recommendations

Fort Sam Gateway

Observations

Fort Sam Gateway is an NCR Partnership Program. The district is very small, with only 15 buildings and 20 businesses. Because of its proximity to Fort Sam Houston, however, the district in the past has seen significant economic activity. 16,000 cars a day passed through the district prior to the recent road closure. Base workers came to the area for dining and running errands. Tourists and other base visitors shopped in the district. The district has a post office, a bank, government office and school district buildings, a Ramada Suites and a gas station that attract users. A local architect with offices in the district has been buying buildings and rehabilitating them. The district also is adjacent to several historic residential areas. In spite of these assets, the district faces significant challenges to economic revitalization. The neighborhoods have crime problems. There is little to no on-street parking. Most seriously, there are too few businesses to support a business association and national security concerns have closed through-access to the base.

Recommendations

Advocate opening New Braunfels through the base. The open road is the key economic driver for retail and restaurant businesses.

Develop a neighborhood-based revitalization plan. The district is too small to support a business association that can form volunteer committees and hire and manage its own staff. Revitalization will best be accomplished as part of an overall neighborhood renewal plan, guided by a committee of residents and businesses, and staffed by city employees. Conversely, revitalization may occur through the efforts of a single interested developer or property owner.

Rehabilitate buildings for offices and services, or possibly antiques stores. If New Braunfels remains closed, it will be very difficult to attract new retail or restaurant uses. The area would be an attractive office and services district, or possibly an antiques district that capitalizes on its historic buildings.

St. Paul Square

Observations

St. Paul Square is a historic retail / restaurant / entertainment center anchored by the Sunset Station and the Alamodome. A group of nine property owners work together to promote the district, led by the Sunset Station Group that has led redevelopment and owns 60-70% of the properties. Much has been accomplished in this area since

redevelopment started in the 1980s, but the area still has trouble attracting local and tourism business and the owners sought NCR Partnership Program status to help market and promote the area. St. Paul Square by itself, however, is mostly a private development that does not fit the NCR Program's goals of neighborhood commercial revitalization. It is questionable whether NCR is the right funding program for this area.

Recommendations

Secure TIRZ funding for marketing.

St. Paul Square sits within the Inner City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) and it seems appropriate to use TIRZ funding rather than NCR funding to market the area. Unless the boundary of the St. Paul Square NCR area were expanded to include nearby commercial properties on East Houston (see next recommendation, below, and the discussion about the East Houston area), the NCR Program does not seem to be the appropriate funding source.

Expand the boundary area to include properties between Center and E. Houston Streets.

The businesses at the west end of East Houston (the Spaghetti Warehouse, Ellis Alley, Wong's Art Bar building, St. Paul's Church) would be more appropriately included in the Sunset Station / St. Paul Square NCR area than the East Houston NCR area. (See the discussion about the East Houston area, below.)

CERA Districts

Overview

Observations

Community Economic Revitalization Agency, Inc., (CERA) was formed in 1998 as an organization working for the economic stability of the Eastside. According to its *2002 Action Plan*, CERA's charge is to implement redevelopment and revitalization projects, provide business technical assistance and provide micro loans to businesses. Key objectives for 2002 included cataloging and prioritizing key residential and commercial properties for redevelopment, steering financial resources to businesses, and marketing the Eastside's revitalization. CERA's revitalization target area is the 956-acre Inner City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ). Specific revitalization projects in 2002 included Good Samaritan Hospital and Bellinger Square. CERA has identified the Ellis Alley Restoration, Carver Street Beautification, South Alamo improvements, New Light Village Commercial District, Good Samaritan Hospital, and the Eastside Cemeteries for possible TIRZ funding. The three NCR programs that CERA administers—Easttown @ Commerce, Historic East Houston and New Light Village—are not specifically mentioned in the *Action Plan*, although CERA staff is assigned to each of the three projects.

CERA has made good progress in a difficult economic environment in a short amount of time. It established the city's largest TIRZ. It partnered with

Community Churches for Social Action to strengthen its ties to the community. It has facilitated business loans. Key stakeholders are concerned, however, about what they perceive to be a lack of visible improvement in the area and that many of CERA's activities do not seem to fit the NCR Program model as developed.

Recommendations

Clarify vision and goals as they relate to neighborhood commercial revitalization. Develop a revitalization workplan with a vision and goals for each NCR funded district, as opposed to one plan for the entire Eastside. Identify highly visible and easy to implement projects. This will help focus staff and board activities on the identified NCR Program areas and produce more concentrated results. This will also enable NCR Program staff to identify the services and funding it should be providing to these areas. In this difficult economic environment, commercial and residential neighborhood revitalization must go hand-in-hand to attract both businesses and residents to the Eastside.

Seek CDC training and technical assistance. CERA would benefit from additional training on community development corporation (CDC) operations and real estate development. The NCR Program should assist CERA by contacting the Houston office of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national nonprofit that provides funding and technical assistance to CDCs.

Work with the City to promote Operation Facelift. The limited information we received about Eastside businesses' use of Operation Facelift was that they were not using the program because they could not afford the matching requirement. CERA should conduct a thorough poll of businesses about the program, assess if there are any ways CERA could better promote the program, and discuss the findings with NCR Program staff. CERA might want to consider using TIRZ funds to pay 100% of a façade demonstration program for a key block of buildings.

Reexamine boundary areas. The current CERA/NCR districts' boundary areas should be redrawn to more closely fit the NCR Program goals. See recommendations for Historic East Houston, St. Paul's Square, and New Light Village. The assessment team's most important recommendation is to expand the NCR Program to incorporate the New Braunfels / MLK Plaza area.



Easttown @ Commerce

Observations

The NCR corridor called Easttown @ Commerce runs along Commerce Street from the Railroad tracks at Walnut Street to Gevers Street. There is a strong node of activity near the Friedrich building that is experiencing new development, and a smaller node at Gevers Street. Commerce is home to several historic cemeteries. The VA Cemetery is a beautiful respite with graves dating back to the Civil and Spanish American Wars. With more critical mass than Houston Street, Commerce seems a good fit for the NCR Program.

Recommendations

Continue efforts to revitalize the area around the Friedrich Building. Assign concentrated staff time to facilitating new development, façade improvements, streetscape improvements, business attraction, clean and safe activities, and image enhancement. Improve the residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent. Link the area to Sunset Station and the historic cemeteries.

Promote cultural tourism. The historic cemeteries will have difficulty attracting conventioners from downtown and the Riverwalk due to the Eastside's image problems, but CERA should continue to explore promoting the cemeteries as part of local history and African American history tours.

Historic East Houston

Observations

The NCR corridor called Historic East Houston has 68 businesses spread along a very long corridor from IH 37 to North New Braunfels. It has very little critical mass, however, and only small pockets of businesses on the west and east ends. Historic East Houston as a corridor does not appear to fit the NCR Program model of what a neighborhood shopping area should be. The historic nature of the corridor is unclear. The MLK Plaza area near the intersection of East Houston and New Braunfels Avenue, however, has much more of a town center feeling—one that fits the NCR Program more closely.

Recommendations

Focus on New Braunfels Avenue. Amend the boundary areas of this NCR Program to focus on the New Braunfels corridor from Duval (the bridge) to East Commerce. This area is a true neighborhood commercial area. An HEB store, Walgreen's, the MLK plaza, and many other neighborhood-serving uses anchor it. It is identified in the *Arena District Community Redevelopment Plan* as "The Commercial/Residential Core" of the Eastside. There are significant crime issues in this area, however, that need to be addressed. If done successfully, this area could become a thriving town center for the Eastside. The rest of East Houston could be left in the NCR area, or removed altogether since there are very few businesses. Many of the

businesses at the extreme west end of East Houston (the Spaghetti Warehouse, Ellis Alley, Wong's Art Bar building, St. Paul's Church) would be more appropriately included in the Sunset Station / St. Paul Square NCR area.

New Light Village

Observations and Recommendations

While there are excellent redevelopment opportunities in this area, New Light Village is a light industrial zone that does not fit the model or goals of the NCR Program. It would be more appropriately funded by the TIRZ.

Southtown

Observations

Southtown is San Antonio's veteran neighborhood commercial district revitalization program with a 13-year track record in demonstrating the success of the Main Street four-point approach. Providing leadership and services to three areas – along South Alamo Street, South St. Mary's Street and South Presa Street, Southtown works closely with the neighborhood organizations in the Lavaca and King William neighborhoods, capitalizes on the area's rich architectural heritage and arts community, and achieves significant improvements in the promotion, appearance and economic vitality of the area.

Around the commercial center of Southtown at St. Mary's and Alamo, the program has stimulated a thriving pedestrian area with shops, galleries and restaurants that draw residents from the region as well as visitors to the city. Its arts district ambience, First Friday Artwalk, and annual events such as Art in the Hood, comprise a natural incubator for creative new businesses. The assessment team had the opportunity to meet with some of these entrepreneurs (glass artist, gallery owner, restaurant owner, video / CD / book rental shop owner) and was impressed by the dynamic energy they generate. Their ability to thrive depends on the overall synergy of a vital district and that district vitality depends on a strong revitalization and management program.

Southtown also has developed a website and stimulated the creation of pocket parks and façade improvements through the NCR Program's Operation Facelift grant program. Southtown enjoys a good relationship with its SAFFE officers and completed a Commercial Corridor Safety Program (C²) assessment. Southtown brought neighbors together in a productive Neighborhood Summit.

Recommendations

Hire an executive director. Southtown has been without a Main Street executive director for many months. While board and committee members and the interim manager have kept the program operating, they will not be able to sustain its productivity or meet its

potential without a full-time manager. It seems that the position has been difficult to fill because the job is too big for one person. The district effectively is two districts (see recommendation below), does not have clerical support, and candidates felt the salary was too low.

Address funding constraints.

Southtown is nearing its final eligibility for NCR Program operation funds. Leaders recognize that if they are going to maintain the program at its current level, they will need to diversify its funding to make up for the city funds. They do not feel that it is realistic to be able to raise enough private funding to maintain the budget that has been supported by the city.

Some possible sources, however, would help to fill some of the gap. Southtown should explore creating a business improvement district (either property- or business-based), securing transient occupancy tax revenues, or collecting merchant association dues.



Create two districts. The assessment team felt that the Southtown service delivery area was extensive and diverse enough to warrant the organization approaching the area as two distinct districts. The character, needs and opportunities of the South Alamo and upper South St. Mary's area on the one hand, are very different from those of the lower St. Mary's and South Presa area on the other. Perhaps the two areas could more effectively be served by the Southtown organization administering two separate programs. Then, the team recommends that the NCR Program define the lower St. Mary's and South Presa area, with its greater economic and social needs, and lesser market power to drive revitalization, as eligible to apply for a new round of NCR Program operational funding.

Pursue TIRZ funds. While the Southtown area is helping to generate tax-increment financing funds for the Inner City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ), it appears that the TIRZ Board has not programmed such funds to be invested back into the Southtown area. The assessment team recommends that Southtown leaders participate more fully in TIRZ discussions and that the TIRZ Board consider investing a fairer share of revenues in Southtown. Strategic Southtown projects certainly could use financing and the Southtown organization needs the concomitant administration funding.

Address business needs. During discussions with Southtown board members and business owners, the assessment team learned that businesses sometimes feel that residential concerns and issues tend to eclipse business concerns in the organization. While Southtown provides the vital function of balancing representation of residential and business interests, the board should remember that revitalization of the district economy inherently means that the vitality of the businesses needs to be a clear priority. The comments that the team heard are an indication that businesses' needs should be addressed more fully. One idea that surfaced was for the organization to provide technical assistance for the businesses to learn how to better promote themselves individually and collectively in clusters and as a district. To embark on stronger support of business development, Southtown should host a business forum to discuss needs and opportunities for joint marketing and promotion, individual and group training ideas, and ongoing strengthened representation of business concerns in the organization's governance.

Use the Web Site for economic development. Southtown is developing a top-notch web site. The organization is reminded to be sure to use the site to market the area's business development opportunities and properties available for lease or purchase.

Work with the City to evaluate Operation Facelift. Southtown did not have any applications for the façade improvement incentive during the past year. Southtown should conduct a thorough poll of businesses about the program, assess if there are any ways the organization could better promote the program, and discuss the findings with NCR staff.

Start publishing the newsletter again. Probably due to its staff shortage, Southtown has not published its newsletter in a year. The newsletter is an effective tool for communicating with and building bridges between the businesses and residents.

Formalize the management of First Friday. Because this event has grown, it now warrants structured leadership from Southtown to control quality, maximize positive impacts, and prevent negative impacts. Merchants should pay for their booths to help fund other event costs and enhancements. Interviewees predicted that more police presence is needed to insure that significant crime and accidents do not occur. The leadership of this event could help seed the future organizational growth of Southtown. Alternatively, interviewees mentioned that a new business association could be launched and it could grow through producing First Friday.

Develop a market vision for

Southtown. Should the area increase daytime retail? Should it become a restaurant row? How will it balance serving locals versus becoming a tourist destination? How will the vision of business and property owners be reconciled with the vision of residents? The organization should lead the resident and business community through a strategic planning process to develop a vision and an action plan to achieve that vision.

Deco District

Observations

The Deco District is a 1.5 mile long section of Fredericksburg Road between the 10 Freeway and Vance Jackson Road. Ninety to 100 businesses line the corridor, including small mom and pops and chain-store-anchored shopping centers. A central core of approximately 70 pedestrian-oriented businesses is clustered between Fulton Street and the Woodlawn Theater. Revitalization activities are led by the Jefferson/Woodlawn Lake Community Development Corporation (CDC) with significant input and help from nearby neighborhood associations. This relatively new CDC merged with the existing Business Alliance in 2002.

The CDC is concentrating its efforts on facilitating new development and creating strategic partnerships with neighborhood associations and city staff. It successfully worked with the neighborhoods and HEB to develop a design for a new store that meets HEB's

needs and creates an Art Deco landmark for the area. The CDC also worked with Jack-in-the-Box on a Deco-inspired design for its soon-to-be completed facility. The CDC recently entered into a master lease for the Travis building in the district's core, and will renovate and lease that space to a new anchor tenant. It also is guiding the design process for a \$5.3 million streetscape improvement program.

While these activities will greatly transform the physical appearance and image of the Deco District, they have been extremely time-consuming. With a small board and limited staff, this has left the CDC with little time to spend on business assistance, business organizing and business marketing (although the CDC does organize a successful Miniature Golf Tournament that nets the organization between \$3,000 and \$5,000 annually).

Recommendations

Increase communication to and participation of district businesses.

Participation by merchants in CDC committees and projects is low due to the fact that the organization does not operate as a true business association. The CDC should visit with businesses to determine how it can best provide services that will cause businesses to become involved in CDC activities. Real estate development is not something businesses will typically come to the table to assist with unless it is a key anchor building that will directly impact their business or a project that can be accomplished quickly.

Businesses are much more likely to become involved in running merchant associations, planning and implementing promotional activities, recruiting new businesses, and making decisions about streetscape designs. Business participation needs to be recruited door to door, via phone and through the building of positive personal relationships with CDC / Association staff and board members. Businesses also need to feel they have a significant voice. Hold quarterly general meetings and publish a more regular newsletter so businesses are kept “in the loop” and don’t feel that decisions are being made without them. The CDC board may need to be expanded to include individuals who can lead these efforts.

Work with the City to attract new funders to the NCR Program. The CDC and NCR staff should work together to educate potential program funders about the benefit of inner city revitalization to the health of the community as a whole.

Increase marketing and promotion of district businesses. The district would greatly benefit from special events and business promotions that bring customers to the street. Little marketing is currently taking place. Past marketing activities include a coupon mailer, a parade, a monthly flea market and an art show. The marketing committee’s main project is the successful golf tournament, but that is a fundraiser, not a business promotion. If a business directory is being considered, it’s purpose and target audience should be carefully thought out. Residents and regional shoppers rarely use business

directories (whether printed or on web sites). They are more likely to use yellow pages or simply drive to the district and seek out the businesses they are looking for. Directories are best used when targeted to tourists and distributed through hotels and visitors bureaus. Tourist-oriented directories should contain information about historic buildings, special events and key anchor businesses and cultural uses. Directories may also be useful as business-to-business reference tools. Continue the Art Deco theme in all marketing and promotional activities. It is very unique and distinguishes the corridor from all other areas of the city. The Spanish Trail can be an additional cultural amenity, but do not confuse the customer by overplaying Spanish Revival design as an architectural theme of the corridor. (It is interesting, however, that Art Deco traditionally picked up design themes from Mayan architecture.)

Work with the City to promote Operation Facelift. The limited information we received about Deco District businesses’ use of Operation Facelift was that they were not using the program because it involved too much paperwork and the Davis Bacon wage requirements made the program too expensive even with the city’s match. The CDC should conduct a thorough poll of businesses about the program, assess if there are any ways the CDC could better promote the program, and discuss the findings with NCR staff.

Seek CDC training and technical assistance. The CDC should ask NCR for additional training on CDC operations and real estate development. The CDC also should contact the Houston office of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national nonprofit that provides funding and technical assistance to CDCs.

Seek additional staff time and resources for real estate development and marketing. The CDC needs additional real estate development expertise. Some of this should be provided by NCR and some by board members. The CDC also needs additional staff to organize marketing and promotions.

The organization should pursue the development of tax increment financing (TIF) for the Deco District. A TIF would help to finance public improvements. It also should explore creating a business improvement district (BID).

Austin Highway

Observations

The Austin Highway Revitalization Project enjoys leadership from a strong and enthusiastic board of directors. It strives to work in close partnership with neighborhood associations. Much of the vision for the area has been established through the development of the *Northeast Inner Loop Plan*, a comprehensive planning process and document that has significantly stimulated interest in and revitalization of the corridor. The NEIL Plan is a good example of how solid neighborhood

planning can lay the foundation for substantial improvements in the quality of life for the area for years to come.

The Austin Highway Revitalization Project Board sees the organization as the facilitator of quality development that meets the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. In this role it has helped to guide major investments in the corridor by Lowes, WalMart, HEB and Walgreens. These catalyst projects effectively expand the consumer trade area for the Highway and that expanding market potential should stimulate additional investment in other major sites such as the Seven Oaks property. Smaller properties and businesses also will benefit from the market expansion if they receive appropriate attention by the organization to help them make changes to capitalize on the catalysts.

The organization is hosting UTSA architecture students to help prepare design guidelines that will lead property and business owners to make design improvements that help rather than detract from the image and appearance of the corridor. It also is pursuing the development of street medians, public art strategies to mitigate the appearance of power line structures, improvements in business signs, reduction of visual clutter, area cleanup, and other ideas to improve the Highway's visual environment and image.

The Austin Highway Alliance is forming as a separate business and property owner association, with the priorities of promoting cleanliness and safety and providing business owners a forum to

have a stronger voice. In a 1.75-mile corridor with 180 businesses, the Alliance will need to keep a clear focus.



Recommendations

Pursue a TIF district. The organization should pursue the development of a tax increment financing (TIF) district for Austin Highway. A TIF would help to finance public improvements such as medians, landscaping, trees, pedestrian nodes, community facilities and the creation of a town center as called for in the NEIL Plan. TIF funds would augment Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) funding and would be invested in enhancements that TXDOT will not pay for. TXDOT should work with the community to adopt a master plan of its future improvements.

Incorporate the logo into signs and marketing materials. The organization has developed a logo that will help to “brand” the district with an attractive image.

Encourage façade improvements.

The organization should market and facilitate the process for using the NCR Program’s Operation Facelift façade grant program to improvement the storefronts of the Highway’s smaller, independent businesses. With impressive investment by corporate retailers drawing customers into the corridor, now is the time for the mom and pop businesses to do more to draw that expanded customer base into their stores. Clean, attractive storefronts with clear, appealing signs, landscaping and lighting are very effective tools in this regard.

Assist businesses. At the same time, the Austin Highway Revitalization Project should help the independent businesses enhance their operating practices inside their stores. With partners such as the NCR Program, Small Business Development Center and the University, the organization should provide small business technical assistance and training in business planning, merchandising, advertising and promotion. With quality attention, the independents can share in the corridor’s developing prosperity.

Seek training in real estate development and related topics. The organization needs to enhance its expertise real estate development, business recruitment, planning and revitalization, and the NCR Program should help address this need. The assessment team discussed several helpful training organizations with Austin Highway leaders including National Development Council, National Main Street Center

(and its Community Initiated Development training program), Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association, International Council of Shopping Centers, and International Downtown Association.

Midtown on Blanco

Observations

The Midtown on Blanco revitalization program started in 1996. It became an official Texas Main Street program in 1998 and a NCR Program revitalization project in 1999. With 36 businesses and 115,000 square feet of commercial space, Midtown on Blanco has helped to restructure the district economy, adding 32 new businesses, 78 new jobs and \$1.7 million in private building improvements since 1998. Regional draws – Chris Madrid’s restaurant, Casbeers and the Blanco Café – are great assets to the district.

The assessment team appreciates that district was in a much rougher position several years ago, with prostitution, property crimes, boarded up buildings and graffiti. A strong partnership with the Police Department and area SAAFE officers, Code Compliance, and hard work on the part of Main Street volunteers has resulted in reduced crime, cleaner appearance and an improved image. These improvements are slowly attracting new investment to the district.

The annual Classic Days event draws 3,000 people. Area clean up days help the entire neighborhood and involve

probationers. The program prepared a very attractive and usable design guidelines document. These accomplishments are stimulating property owners to begin to take advantage of the NCR Program’s Operation Facelift façade improvement grant. Continued improvement in the district’s appearance is expected to accurately reflect its increasing vitality.

In terms of challenges, the very small size of the district and the low incomes of surrounding residents make it hard for the organization to recruit volunteers and raise money. Board turnover in 2002 resulted in many of the original founding members leaving the board, so the organization has lost some momentum since then.

Recommendations

Promote successes! Midtown has come a long way, but people need to be reminded through events, awards programs, newsletters, and before and after photos.

Engage property owners. The Midtown on Blanco program has tried hard to involve some key property owners in the district’s revitalization efforts, but has had limited success. Without the participation of these key players, who control large amounts of the district space, revitalization is indeed constrained. The program should continue to try to recruit these property owners’ participation by appealing to their civic pride. Rather than having one or two program representatives approach these property owners, the

staff and board should use their broader connections in the community approach them.

Assess building needs. Midtown program leaders informed the assessment team that several buildings in the district appear to need structural repairs and significant maintenance repairs. The program should host a friendly building tour by an architect and engineer who can accurately apprise building owners of such needs. Perhaps the NCR Program could cover or share the costs of the review.

Pursue additional bonds and explore TIF and BID potential. Bond funds totaling \$406,000 have been allocated for streetscape improvements, but much more is needed. The organization should pursue another bond allocation.

A tax increment financing (TIF) district also could help fund public improvements. A business improvement district (BID) could help fund improvements and maintenance or program operating funds. The district probably is too small for a TIF or BID to work, but perhaps these tools would be feasible if the district were expanded. The organization should research these funding mechanisms.

Expand to Hildebrand. As Midtown on Blanco explores its reason for existence and rationale for receiving funding in future years, leaders should consider operating a second program area covering the commercial concentration on Hildebrand Avenue between Blanco Road and San Pedro Avenue. This area appears to offer a cohesive place

to extend the achievements of the Midtown program. The first step in exploring expansion is for Midtown leaders to meet with prospective leaders from Hildebrand. Then the Midtown on Blanco organization could apply to the NCR Program for funds to operate a second district on Hildebrand in addition to the Midtown district.

Study the parking supply. Midtown on Blanco should conduct a study to determine the optimal management of the district's parking.

Reinvigorate the board. The organization should recruit new board members, convene a board training, and work through a board strategic planning and action plan development process.

Revisit the Main Street Resource Team Report. Midtown on Blanco board and staff should review the 1998 Texas Main Street Program Resource Team Report. It offers an aggressive volume of recommendations on how to enhance the program in all four Main Street areas. The organization should strategically choose from the many ideas presented.

Presa Real

Observations

Avenidas, Inc., a nonprofit organization whose mission is the economic revitalization of the Avenidas del Rio Business Corridor, runs the Presa Real NCR revitalization project. Avenidas, Inc., was formed as a separate organization by the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. Avenidas has its own staff and board of directors. The Presa Real district is one small portion of the corridor. There are 19 buildings and 20 businesses in the six block, one-mile section. Avenidas plans to organize additional revitalization projects for other sections of the corridor once Presa Real revitalization is on track. It also is interested in facilitating real estate development and becoming a community development corporation (CDC).

Avenidas has concentrated on high-impact projects that show the community how the area's history, people and resources can be galvanized. Activities have included paint parties, neighborhood events, design guidelines, tree plantings, grant writing, façade improvements, new business facilitation, establishment of a community information center and work on creating a community center facility. Activities are implemented by one staff person and committees organized around the Main Street Approach. Avenidas also is working with merchants in the corridor to form the South Presa Street Merchants Association.

The program has achieved good success despite a difficult economic environment. A market study for the area sponsored by the NCR Program in 2000 indicated that there were 828 vacant houses in the adjacent neighborhoods and little unmet retail demand by current residents. New people are moving into the area, however, and housing prices are beginning to rise.



Recommendations

Reexamine boundary areas. The portion of South Presa Street that is currently in the Southtown NCR district may be more appropriately made part of the Presa Real NCR district. Examine how customers and residents use these areas and combine them if it makes sense.

Seek CDC training and technical assistance. Avenidas should ask NCR for additional training on CDC operations and real estate development. It should also contact the Houston office of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national nonprofit that provides funding and technical assistance to CDCs.

Seek additional NCR designations. If Avenidas plans to move its NCR activities further down the corridor, it should identify geographic districts or business clusters, and seek additional NCR designations and funding for these expanded services.

5. Models from Other Cities

Appendix B presents a chart summarizing the assessment team's findings of its telephone survey of seven other U.S. city's neighborhood commercial revitalization programs:

- Chicago
- Cleveland
- Pittsburgh
- San Diego
- Seattle
- St. Louis
- Tacoma

For each citywide program, the chart lists the year it started, the number of districts it serves, number of city staff, budget, services, how local districts are selected, characteristics of the local

district projects, networking association, lessons learned, and program initiatives for the future.

The chart offers a lot of details, but here are some summary points:

Program Age. Most programs evolved from concerns and initiatives during the mid-1980s and launched their current approach in the early 1990s.

Number of Districts. Districts served ranged from 12 (Tacoma) to more than 50 (Chicago).

Budget. Annual program budgets ranged from \$200,000 to several million dollars. San Diego, with 18 districts, has an annual budget of \$3.6 million for its Office of Small Business, plus \$900,000 for the Business Improvement District Council, the nonprofit partner.

Services. The city coordinating programs provide a range of financial and technical assistance services to the local district projects. Services include grants for operating funds, specialized grants for promotion and marketing, incentives and architectural assistance for façade improvements, small business training, business recruitment, networking and education forums, and technical assistance in strategic planning and work plan facilitation, organizational development, fund raising, and real estate development.

Selection. Most of the cities use a competitive application process to select participating districts.

District Programs. The district programs are managed by a variety of organizations including business associations, merchant groups and chambers of commerce, business improvement districts, and community development corporations. District program budgets vary considerably, from \$5,000 to \$100,000 or more.

Networking Association. Four of the cities have citywide associations that represent the private partner organization to the city program structure. Some, like San Diego's, are more formal and fully developed than others. The associations provide an essential forum for training, networking, advocacy, cooperative and collective action, and leadership development.

Lessons. The surveyed cities offer a wealth of experience in commercial district revitalization. San Antonio's NCR Program already follows many of the practices recommended by the survey cities. Also, the assessment team provides additional recommendations in this report that are consistent with these cities' comments about the lessons their staff has learned. Some key lessons are:

- Fund operations of local district programs.
- Require performance and participation through contracts.
- Develop a networking association to nurture leadership and capitalize on economies of scale of the member districts.
- Stimulate creativity through flexible grants.

- Encourage strategic planning and require work plans.
- Provide training in board development, fund raising, and real estate development.

Initiatives for the Future. Most of the cities plan on continuing to expand their network of local district programs, but at a slow, strategic pace that emphasizes quality rather than quantity growth. They are working toward increasing their ability to flexibly respond in a customized fashion to the individual needs of each district. They plan on accomplishing that by conducting more strategic planning and work plan facilitation services in each district and by listening more closely to the districts' issues and needs.

6. NCR Program Recommendations

Keep Up the Good Work

San Antonio's Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program is making a difference in districts throughout the City. As stated above, the program is accomplishing its goals of empowering community-based revitalization organizations, reinvigorating district economies and generating vibrant visual environments. The program's start-up years are a solid foundation upon which to evolve it to keep pace with the dynamic needs and rise in sophistication of the client districts.

Maintain Local Funding

As was a key finding in the 2001 NCR Program review, the assessment team for this review observes and validates the essential need to continue funding the operations of the local district projects. The NCR Program should continue to encourage local programs to diversify their funding, help the districts study the feasibility of creating BIDs and TIFs, and enhance its training and technical assistance services in fund raising, grant proposal writing and corporate sponsorship. The assessment team does not find it realistic, however, that local district projects will be able to substantially replace the funding that the City provides to them. Thus, assuming

continued quality performance of the local district project and sufficient NCR Program resources, we recommend that the NCR continue to fund Revitalization Projects after the initial six-year period. Perhaps such continued funding could be offered as one-year renewals.

Expand the NCR Program

The NCR Program should be augmented in terms of designated districts, the services it provides and NCR Program staff available to provide services. To keep a networking and technical assistance program alive and dynamic it is healthy to periodically stimulate the group with the new energy of new local district projects. The NCR Program should continue to use the Partnership Project designation process to seed new nonprofit partners. Empowering local community groups to tackle comprehensive commercial district revitalization is the NCR Program's most effective role. Of course the creation of new local district projects must be balanced with maintaining the strength of the existing programs. The program should pursue resources to allow it to bring on one to three new Partnership and/or Revitalization Projects each year for an expected total of five to ten additional projects over the next five years.

Some practical steps to expanding the number of designated districts can be built upon the success of existing districts. As mentioned above, the Midtown on Blanco program could be expanded to include Hildebrand. The Midtown organization's six-year city

funding period for its current project area is approaching completion. The group could receive a new round of funding to administer a new program along Hildebrand. Similarly, this report set forth the idea above to divide the Southtown district into two separate revitalization project areas. The lower St. Mary's and South Presa area would be designated as a new Revitalization Project and the Southtown organization would receive a new round of City funding to deliver an intensified program to focus on that area's distinct needs.

Appendix C lists the assessment team's comments regarding prospective NCR Program areas throughout the city. Not all new commercial areas that the program serves require nonprofit partners. Some might be city staff driven. To explore the effectiveness of stationing NCR staff in field offices, the NCR Program should consider conducting a demonstration program.

Others might be organization-driven, like Avenida Guadalupe. Some warrant an opportunity site redevelopment strategy and because they are not "districts" they do not have the ability to stimulate a business organization anyway. Yet others are small nodes that need public improvements.

As for the enhancement of NCR Program services and staffing power, the assessment teams recommends that staffing be expanded to allow for an intensification of the day-to-day technical assistance functions that the program provides. The local districts appreciate NCR Program staff's coaching them on revitalization

strategies and management challenges, troubleshooting problems and hurdles, and shepherding projects and issues through the halls of city government. Augmenting staff and rededicating existing staff time to these important functions will increase local district achievements.

Beyond the daily technical assistance delivered to the district projects, the NCR Program should offer more formal strategic planning facilitation to each. This will help each district more effectively deploy its staff, volunteer and funding resources. The district projects also showed the need to achieve more immediate and visible successes. A strategic planning framework is very useful for establishing practices that result in recognizable projects and higher program visibility.

Develop Specialty Capabilities and Enhance Training

As the NCR Program evolves, its needs for specialized knowledge and skills grow. The following are some of the local districts' needs that surfaced during the assessment interviews:

- Managing a sophisticated non-profit corporation with complex personnel, legal and accounting responsibilities
- Operating a community development corporation (CDC)
- Developing a fund raising plan
- Developing corporate sponsorship for events and programs
- Writing, obtaining and managing foundation and government grants
- Providing specialized consulting to business owners
- Conducting business recruitment
- Managing economic development projects, especially the real estate development aspects
- Coordinating public and private improvement projects with multiple government entities

In response to these needs, the NCR Program team will need to evolve its expertise, most critically in the area of real estate finance, development and management. The program can acquire these specialty skills by adding new staff positions filled by individuals who possess the needed knowledge and experience, filling existing vacancies with people with these skills, training staff, partnering with other city departments to add individuals with the needed skills onto the NCR team, and bringing in consultants who can provide

the needed specialty technical assistance and training.

As expressed by district interviewees, some training will be more effective if it is customized and delivered on-site for individual districts rather than only at the citywide program level for all districts.

Districts need training on CDBG goals and requirements so there is more mutual understanding of why and how performance is tracked. The training would complement a manual on how to prepare performance reports and invoices.

Rein in the Bureaucracy

As stated above in Section 3, the extraordinary burden of reporting, compliance and billing paperwork on the local district projects is a problem. It also takes up too much scarce City staff time. Since such a loud and clear message from all interviewees came across that the amount of "red tape" is dysfunctional, the assessment team believes that there must be sufficient motivation at all levels to reform the volume and flow of NCR Program paper.

The assessment team recommends that the Neighborhood Action Department establish a task force to review the NCR Program's reporting, compliance and billing processes. The task force should include representatives from Housing and Community Development, NAD, NCR, Assistant City Manager's Office, and the local district projects.

As an immediate objective, the task force should figure out how to streamline NAD's invoice reimbursement approval process from the reported 6-8 weeks to a reasonable 2-3 weeks. This should be an easy win for NAD. This problem gives NAD the opportunity to make a promise to correct a problem that is very near and dear to the local programs and then deliver a timely solution to that promise.

After the task force successfully reforms the reporting, compliance and billing processes to reduce the volume of paperwork on local district projects, the NCR Program should host a workshop on how to fulfill requirements including CDBG. The NCR Program also should publish a manual on how the local programs should prepare their invoices to insure efficient processing and payment.

Reposition Program Style

Reforming and streamlining the NCR Program's paperwork will go a long way to position the program as less monitoring- and enforcement-oriented. As discussed above under Brewing Frustrations, the NCR Program needs to emphasize its performance of roles that are more desired by its clients, the local districts. These roles include technical assistance and coaching, advocacy within City government, problem solving, and training in response to local program needs. In printed materials, visits to district projects and public presentations, staff should articulate and demonstrate these roles. As a matter of program style, these are the roles that

staff should *lead* with. (Of course these leading roles need to be backed up with meaningful monitoring, enforcement, performance review and structure.)

Staff should state that the program is striving to achieve creative flexibility in embracing the diversity of local district projects and then follow those words up with scheduling specialized training forums, such as in real estate development or fund raising, that district projects are requesting.

Enhance Program Visibility

The assessment team learned that awareness of individual district achievements and the success of the NCR Program as a whole is not as strong as it needs to be. The kick-off dinner and presentations convened to launch the program assessment illustrated the latent appreciation that the local districts have for each other's work and accomplishments. Also, city elected officials and staff benefited from the much-needed opportunity to hear the program successes. It is easy to generate a list of ideas to enhance program visibility. Of the following, the assessment team especially believes the time is ripe for a NCR awards program.

- Create an annual awards program with a banquet, awards brochure and media coverage that celebrates the successes of the local district projects
- Give a presentation twice a year to the City Council that updates the NCR Program's accomplishments

and current initiatives and profiles one or more local districts

- Give quarterly presentations to NCR Program partners such as other City departments and programs, economic development organizations and corporations
- Publish an annual report that presents quantitative and qualitative program accomplishments and celebrates the district projects' success stories
- Distribute the program newsletter to a wider audience
- Release press releases several times a year
- Email quarterly program updates to partners and supporters
- Enhance the program's web site and mail out a glossy postcard encouraging people to visit it

Invest in the Long Haul

As mentioned in Section 3, local program participants, city staff and elected officials should recognize, or continue to recognize, that commercial district revitalization in the inner city takes a long time. The assessment team compliments San Antonio leaders for realizing more clearly than in most communities that they need to be devoted to this work for the long haul. It requires six to ten years for successful revitalization programs to begin visibly revitalizing a commercial neighborhood. And then, as a district becomes "vital," it requires permanent management to maintain that vitality.

Develop Funding Tools

The assessment team has noted that San Antonio is a poorer community than many. As such, the private and public sectors' ability to support revitalization efforts is constrained. The City needs to develop its use of several funding tools that can support commercial district revitalization. These include more tax increment financing (TIFs) areas for developing infrastructure and business-based and/or property-based business improvement districts (BIDs) and maintenance assessment districts for funding local district revitalization program operations and infrastructure maintenance.

The assessment team commends San Antonio on its creative uses of CDBG funds and recommends that it continue to explore other creative uses or trade those funds for general fund monies to invest in NCR work. Also, several times during the interview process participants noted that it would be desirable for the cities' bond allocation process make NCR Program areas a higher priority to reinforce the public and private support already being invested in the districts.

San Antonio's corporate and foundation sector is not currently contributing to the community's neighborhood commercial district revitalization movement in major ways. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that this sector is not as large as in many other cities and partly due to the fact that corporations and foundations have not been sufficiently and effectively approached.

The Neighborhood Action Department should convene a *Mayor's Forum on Inner City Reinvestment* to initiate a stronger partnership between the NCR commercial districts and the corporate and foundation community. Invite key corporate and nonprofit funders to the Forum to hear about the program's success, get inspired about why inner-city revitalization is essential to community health, and share their philanthropic goals with San Antonio's NCR Program districts.

These players could help support local program operations and physical projects in the districts as well as underwrite NCR network-wide learning initiatives such as a comprehensive real estate development training program.



Enhance Interdepartmental Coordination

The assessment team got the impression that the NCR Program would benefit from a boost in visibility and “signals from the top” of the City administration that NCR Program goals and activities are a clear priority. Interdepartmental and inter-program coordination will not happen consistently and effectively until such partnerships are expected and rewarded by the City's top leadership.

Interviewees brought up the need for enhanced interdepartmental coordination most often regarding public works projects. The Public Works Department needs to coordinate better with the NCR Program and Planning.

The districts with Neighborhood Plans in place show a better cementing of neighborhood revitalization with commercial revitalization. The City should strive to have a neighborhood planning process or adopted plan in place for all NCR Program areas. The Neighborhood Planning unit and the NCR senior planner can collaborate on that goal. When the Planning Department is assisting a neighborhood that has a prospective NCR district, it should bring the NCR Program into the planning process early. Neighborhood Planning and the NCR Program should proactively recruit neighborhoods together.

As the district projects increase their role as facilitators of private reinvestment and real estate development projects, increased

coordination with all city construction, approval and permitting departments will be needed. The City should consider establishing interdepartmental Technical Advisory Committees, or multiple-agency, problem-solving “Red Teams” to address specific issues or projects for each NCR district, or particular challenges shared by the districts across the city.

Consider an Operation Facelift Makeover

Operation Facelift should be a powerful tool for stimulating visible, physical enhancements in the NCR districts, but it seems that it does not have as many customers as it should. The NCR Program, working with local district project staff, should evaluate any impediments to Operation Facelift by interviewing its users and decliners and making adjustments in the program to make it more appealing.

Nurture Network Leadership

The NCR Program’s *Networking Forum* provides monthly meetings for all NCR project coordinators and quarterly trainings for board members and business owners.

The NCR Program should build upon the *Networking Forum* to realize the collective leadership potential of the board and staff of the district projects. The participating projects could establish committees to capitalize on economies of scale that they share (e.g., business and organization

insurance, special event equipment, citywide corporate sponsorship package) and pursue initiatives that are most effectively pursued as a united group (e.g., small business legislation, commercial district revitalization grant applications, community-based real estate development training).

Next Steps

The assessment team appreciates the opportunity to visit San Antonio’s fantastic neighborhoods, learn about revitalization leaders’ successes and challenges, and offer advice for improving the NCR Program. It is a program that has a proud track record and a very promising future. The team recommends that the NCR Program establish a steering committee of City and district representatives to review the observations and recommendations in this report and prioritize and schedule implementation of the more cogent ideas for program development.

Appendix A. Schedule of Interviews

2003 NCR Program Review Schedule

	Time	Group	Representatives
Sunday 2/2/2003			
	6:00 PM	Kimberly Coleman, Economic Development Manager, NCR Program Director	
Day One - Monday 2/3/2003			
	8:00 AM	Neighborhood Action Department	David Garza - NAD Director, Paula Stallcup - NAD Asst. Director, Raquel Favela - N'hood & Housing Dev. Manager
	9:00 AM	Housing and Community Development Department	Elisa Soto - Community Development Coordinator, Trisha Runyan - CD Analyst, Albert Solorzano - CD Analyst
	10:00 AM	Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program	Celine Casillas-Thomasson - Senior Eco. Dev Specialist, Vincent Martinez - Senior Eco. Dev Specialist, Abigail Kinnison - Senior Planner
	11:15 AM	Public Works Department	Bill Krause - Capital Programs Manager
	12:00 PM	lunch break	
	1:15 PM	Planning Department	Emil Moncivais – Planning Department Director Ann McGlone – Historic Preservation Officer
	2:00 PM	Mayor's Office	Mayor Ed Garza, Leilah Powell, Joanna Wolaver
	3:15 PM	City Manager's Office	Jelynn Burley - Assistant City Manager

Day Two - Tuesday, 2/4/2003	8:00 AM	Ft Sam Gateway (PP)	Celine Casillas-Thomasson
	10:00 AM	St. Paul's Square (PP)	Bruce Spencer, Brita Lunsdstom
	12:00 PM	lunch break	
	1:00 PM	SAPD	Capt. Harry Griffith; Officer John Ornelaz (met on site); Officer Pete Ovalle (met on site); Officer Felipe Santos (met on site); Officer Ron Strothman (met on site)
	2:00 PM	prepare for kick-off event	
	5:00 PM	Kick-off Event	
	5:30 PM	Meet/Greet/Eat	
	6:30 PM	David Garza	
	6:35 PM	Mayor	
	7:00 PM	Presentation by NCR Areas	
	7:45 PM	Prizes	
	8:00 PM	Adjourn	
Day Three - Wednesday, 2/5/2003	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Community Economic Revitalization Agency (CERA)	Ida Brown; Terri Williams; Hoi Ellis; Gerald Embry; Velma Kemp
Day Four - Thursday, 2/6/03	8:00 AM - 3:30 PM	Southtown	Carol Hodge; James Lifshutz; Penny boyer; Joan Grona; Lisa Wong; Gini Garcia; Angela Martinez; Jack Carley
Day Five - Friday, 2/7/03	8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	David Garza	
	9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Deco District	Roy Huerta; Paul Stahl; Noel Suniga; Joan Ottavio; Lonnie Fussel

Monday 2/17/03		Review Prospective NCR Areas	
Day Six - Tuesday, 2/18/03	8:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Austin Highway Revitalization Project	Gloria Johnson-Ramirez; Jack Judson; Linda Murray
	4:00 PM	Meet with Council members' Staff	Laura Cabanilla-Cruz (District 3), Shelia McNeil (District 2)
Day Seven - Wednesday , 2/19/03	9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Midtown on Blanco	Rick Reyna; Rene Balderas
Day Eight - Thursday, 2/20/03	8:00 AM	Meet with Council member District 7	Councilman Julian Castro (District 7)
	9:30 AM - 1:30 PM	Presa Real	Alvin E. Brown; Darrin Lawrence; Cindy Taylor; Franki Martin
	2:00 PM	Meet with Kimberly Coleman, NCR Program Director	
	7:00 PM	Out brief	City Staff

Appendix B. Table of Models from Other Cities

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
CHICAGO Business Express and Retail Chicago programs 1992 Department of Planning and Development	150 funded delegate agencies. 50-60 retail districts. 10 Case Managers CDBG funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help businesses cut through red tape. ▪ Oversee grants to delegate agencies. ▪ Capacity building classes ▪ Quarterly training ▪ Centralized retail recruitment support. One-stop information center on available properties and incentives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual application rounds for CDBG funding. ▪ Must show evidence of organizational capacity. ▪ Community Development Advisory Council makes recommendations to Department Commissioners. ▪ \$30-\$60G annual grants per district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chambers of Commerce, business associations, special service agencies (BIDs) ▪ Raise funds through CDBG, corporations, CDC activities, assessments, redevelopment and membership dues. ▪ Districts are fairly homogenous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly training workshops. ▪ Retail Chicago is a partnership with LISC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide board development training. ▪ Provide fundraising training. ▪ Partner with stronger nonprofits or "helper organizations" if district group does not have capacity. ▪ Monitor agreements and expectations. ▪ Small grants take as much time as large ones. ▪ Have one point of contact for retail recruitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None mentioned.

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
CLEVELAND Community Development Corporation program. Some activity after 1969 riots. Activity picked up in the '80s, grew into full-fledged citywide industry in 1990s. Support provided by city's Community and Economic Development Dept.	50 CDCs Funding partnerships with Enterprise Foundation, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Cleveland Shorebank and Trust, local foundations. Other funding from state Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. 22 city staff in ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low-cost gap financing ▪ Technical assistance ▪ Project management support ▪ Storefront renovation program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CDCs form in local neighborhoods and join networking associations. ▪ CNDC and LISC select Main Street districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CDCs focus on one or more neighborhoods. ▪ New home construction, housing rehab, home ownership counseling. ▪ commercial and retail development ▪ storefront renovations ▪ industrial development ▪ quality of life activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cleveland Neighborhood Development Corp. is assn. Of 42 CDCs; provides technical assistance and advocacy services for member orgs. Also oversees Main Street programs in four districts. ▪ Neighborhood Progress Inc. raises funds from private sources for housing and commercial development undertaken by CDCs. ▪ Cleveland Housing Network is an association of CDCs responsible for \$10-15 million of housing construction in neighborhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective-ness through public / private partner-ships and demo-cratic, neighborhood-based programs. "Modern day town halls." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City and NPI are developing productivity measures ▪ CNDC wants to expand the number of CDCs using the Main Street Approach.

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
PITTSBURGH Mainstreets Pittsburgh Program 2000 (evolved from former Neighborhood Business District Revitalization Program of the mid-1980s) Business Development Center of Urban Redevelopment Authority	23 districts (consolidated from 40+) 8 staff (BDC) \$1million (general fund, CDBG, and State Main Street program allocates \$300K / year for 5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Technical Assistance Center provides TA in organizational development and fund raising ▪ Community Design Center of Pittsburgh provides design TA ▪ PA Downtown Center provides Main Street training ▪ Shared District Management grant funds manager positions only with agencies who have managers that serve multiple districts ▪ Business Improvement District Matching Grant funds up to \$30,000 for 3 years per each district that has a BID ▪ Unified grant program provides \$100K total for districts' promotion and marketing ▪ Streetface program provides grants for streetscape and façade improvements ▪ Top Shops merchant support training program ▪ Real estate development TA and gap financing ▪ Quarterly meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applications for business improvement district match, shared district management and unified grant for promotion and marketing ▪ Criteria include eight Main Street principles ▪ Requirements include active board, Main Street committees, baseline business inventory, and an adopted Business Development Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District operating agencies are CDCs and business associations ▪ Operating budgets range \$40K – 100K per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The URA sponsors quarterly meetings ▪ The State Main Street program, PA Downtown Center, Community Technical Assistance Center and Community Design Center of Pittsburgh also provide networking forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation is required by operating contracts with each agency ▪ Require each to have individualized strategic plan and match city resources and services to their unique needs and capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to tailor city's attention and services to specific needs identified in district program's strategic plans

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
SAN DIEGO Office of Small Business 1991 Economic Development Department Business Improvement District Council (BIDC) is non-profit partner (1992)	18 districts 9 city staff \$3.6 million (general fund, some CDBG) BIDC has 5 FT staff plus 9 seasonal staff; budget = \$900K (\$670 from City, plus earned income, grants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business improvement district funds (totaling \$1 million) are collected by the City and distributed back to each BID Small Business Enhancement Program provides additional cash grants to district programs for management (\$300,000) Each district thus receives about \$70K Storefront Improvement Program Infrastructure Impact Program provides funds to mitigate effects of construction on businesses Training workshops and conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts self form BIDs, then enter into a contract with City to receive BID funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each district program is a business improvement district (BID) Budgets average \$120K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Diego Business Improvement District Council (BIDC) Monthly meetings of presidents from each BID Networking and advocacy Small business policy formation Property development training Special events sponsorship package underwrites corporate sponsorship for events throughout all 18 BIDs Technical assistance to new staff and boards Citywide banner program Legal advice to BIDs (attorney on staff) Full-time grant writer on staff Special event equipment, shared by all BIDs Maintenance and equipment workers shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIDC is the quasi-private bridge between public and private sectors BIDC attracts participation and leadership to secure effective and efficient access to and use of city services and funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIDC is helping district programs form maintenance assessment districts BIDC is developing a business insurance initiative to secure better insurance for small business owners, BID organizations and staff (health, dental, life)

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
SEATTLE Neighborhood Business District Program 1985 Office of Economic Development	35 districts 2 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TA to form and sustain Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) ▪ Annual organizational development workshop ▪ Leadership workshops ▪ Façade improvement program in some areas ▪ Annual funding to ten business districts totaling \$118K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Districts propose in response to RFP for funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District chambers of commerce, business associations and merchant groups ▪ 4 are BIAs, plus Downtown BIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighborhood Business Council: provides publications, TA; 1 staff; (c)(4) with \$100K annual (City); current focus on crime, transportation issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nurture leadership ▪ Flexible pots of money to stimulate creativity ▪ Wide variety of programs / multiple access points ▪ Provide funding to support the ongoing operating needs of each program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NBC published <i>Guide to Improvement Projects for Seattle Business Districts</i> ▪ Need new entrepreneurs – hard to train the old ones; invest attention in new

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
ST. LOUIS St. Louis Development Corp. Commercial District Manager Program. Development Corp. is nonprofit arm of city. Program established 1990.	28 districts 9 city staff. 7 business managers \$1.9 M program. CDBG funds facades, streetscapes and business managers' salaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Façade incentive program. ▪ Business Assistance Center. ▪ Business Managers housed in field offices that serve multiple districts. ▪ Serve as staff to business associations. ▪ Provide technical assistance. Assist with events and association management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every ward in the city has a program. Encourage groups to form business associations but not a strict criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boards run business associations. ▪ Promote funding programs ▪ Administer façade program. ▪ Plan public improvements ▪ Establish BIDS ▪ Business retention and recruitment ▪ Advertising and promotions ▪ Few have professional staff. ▪ Raise funds through membership dues, events, CDBG grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nothing formal. ▪ Encourage districts to attend Main Street and other training programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficult for small districts to support associations with only BID funds. Don't generate enough income. Staff salaries are too low to retain good people. Need city augmentation .. ▪ Field offices are very professional. Connected to city computer networks. Share space with other nonprofits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish BIDs in 10-15 districts to supplement city funding and increase business association staffing . This will also allow city business manages to concentrate on facilitating development.

City Program Name Year Started Department	# Districts # City Staff Budget (Source)	Services City Staff Duties	Selection	District Programs	Networking Association	Lessons	Initiatives / Visions for Future
TACOMA Neighborhood Business District Revitalization Program 1991 Economic Development Department	12 districts 4 people with other responsibilities = 2.5 FTE Budget = Staff only (estimate = \$200,000) (General Fund; some EDA in the past)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizational development TA and planning ▪ Help form the district organizations and serve as staff to them ▪ Façade improvement design guidance only ▪ Public design improvements ▪ Small business coaching ▪ Merchandising consulting ▪ Newsletter ▪ Workshops, conferences ▪ Do not provide funding to districts, except last year used \$30K total to provide max. of \$5,000 each to help districts pay part-time staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No application ▪ Over time, districts approached NBDRP and requested TA forming a district organization; For the most part, only traditional commercial districts were accepted ▪ Once NBDRP accepts a district, it gets 1-year provisional membership in Cross District Association ▪ Only NBDRP client districts are included in CDA ▪ Do not expect to grow by more than a couple more districts if any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Of 12, 5 have part-time staff; others no staff other than staffing power provided by NBDRP staff ▪ Very small budgets (\$5,000 to \$20,000) ▪ Membership organizations with merchant association character, (c)(6)s ▪ Focus on promotions and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross District Association : monthly meetings (city staff provides staffing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Close working relationships between NBDRP staff and districts, combined with small business interests represented on the CDA, result in business districts viewing city government as advocate, ally, partner ▪ Cross District Association (a (c)(6)), formed a (c)(3) to attract charitable donations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Want to see each association maximize its potential for membership and become stronger advocate for their needs ▪ Desire to be able to support districts financially, but city's taxing capability is declining; also, do not have tax increment financing in WA

Appendix C. Notes on Prospective NCR Districts

San Antonio NCR Program Prospective NCR Areas Windshield Survey, February 17, 2003

1. Flores Street

- No critical mass, not enough density
- Some node potential
- Warehouses at south end
- Light industry potential
- Core at Alamo
- Revitalization and new buildings already happening
- Housing Authority
- Community College District office
- Appropriate for destination infill
- Continue to clean up; support development

2. Five Points

- Not much commercial on Guadalupe (east); more on West
- Nice node at Brazos and Guadalupe
- Street lights
- New construction Avenida Guadalupe Association
- Lots of community and social services
- Few existing businesses with which to create an association
- Room for infill

3. Old Castroville

- Not enough mass
- Cemetery and related businesses
- Development opportunity site at General McMullen
- HEB Las Palmas Center – large center that can meet all needs of surrounding consumer market

4. General McMullen

- Kelly Landing Shopping Center; base-serving retail
- Clean up; underground utilities

5. Triangle on Cupples

- Low-income independent retail
- No critical mass
- Needs renewal (tear down)
- Needs undergrounding
- Needs more redevelopment than the market can support – market is dead people
- Paint and sign grants

6. Southcross

- Family Dollar – clean up
- Vacant; pedestrian storefronts
- Potential pedestrian nodes, but weak demographics
- Not enough critical mass for an association
- Residential: signs of pride and renewal
- Some opportunity sites for mixed use
- Post Office site
- Vacant lots
- Where street jags, the district stops
- But, New Laredo has the retail

7. Broadway

- Private-driven
- Good shape
- Strip will never be pedestrian oriented
- Leave it to itself
- Neighborhood Plan

8. Hildebrand between San Pedro and Blanco

- Walgreens
- Jim's Restaurant
- Antiques
- Street and sidewalk improvements
- Needs redevelopment

9. Fredericksburg Road

- No. Just more blight and you have enough already

10. Saint Mary's around Woodlawn

- Nice node
- Why here? Nightclubs